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CONTENTS

The American Association for the Advancement of Science:—

The Scope and Method of State Natural History Surveys: PROFESSOR F. C. NEWCOMBE 615

Recent Legislation affecting Educational Institutions in Kansas: DR. CHARLES A. SHULL 622

Scientific Notes and News 624

University and Educational News 627

Discussion and Correspondence:—

Conventional Position of Monoclinic Crystals, a Question in Crystallographic Usage: PROFESSOR A. C. GILL, 628

Quotations:—

Universities and Intellect 629

Scientific Books:—

Clarke and Ruedemann on the Eurypterida of New York: DR. C. R. EASTMAN. *Munro's Palæolithic Man and Terramara Settlements in Europe:* W. D. WALLIS. *Balls on the Cotton Plant in Egypt:* T. H. K. *Blanckenhorn's Naturwissenschaftliche Studien am Toten Meer und im Jordantal:* DR. ELLSWORTH HUNTINGTON 631

Special Articles:—

The Perfect Stage of Cylindrosporium on Prunus avium: B. B. HIGGINS. *On the History of Cottons and Cotton Weevils:* DR. CHARLES H. T. TOWNSEND 637

The Astronomical and Astrophysical Society of America: DR. PHILIP FOX 639

MSS. intended for publication and books, etc., intended for review should be sent to Professor J. McKeen Cattell, Garrison-on-Hudson, N. Y.

THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE
ADVANCEMENT OF SCIENCE

THE SCOPE AND METHOD OF STATE
NATURAL HISTORY SURVEYS¹

It is a matter of common knowledge that before the middle of the last century many of the states of the union had established state surveys, and the national government was exploring the great west, fixing boundaries, locating routes and trails, and mapping the physical features in those vast areas. In both state and national surveys, geology received a large share of attention, but physiography, zoology and botany were not neglected. Many of the states, after making a recognizance of the geological features, identified and listed their plants and animals, as did the states of Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Ohio and Indiana. A condition to be noted in the establishment of a number of these early state surveys is that they were organized for the purpose of exploring and studying all of the natural resources of the commonwealth, scientific as well as economic. The survey of Michigan was established at the admission of the state to the union in 1837 as geological, zoological, botanical and topographic. The prevailing idea in these early surveys in the various states seems to have been what we may designate by the word *recognizance*, including geology, physiography, botany and zoology.

As the century continued through its third and entered its fourth quarter, the main attention of the state surveys became

¹ Address of the vice-president and chairman of Section G, American Association for the Advancement of Science, Cleveland, December 31, 1912.